American Women Missionaries and Pioneers Collection

Part 1: Missionaries

The Esther Morse Papers, 1921 – 1965

Series I a

Outgoing Typed Letters

Folder Description:

Correspondence: 1930, Term I, 3

Box Number:

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Kachek, Hainan
October 25, 1930

Dear Folks:

I think we must be due to have a change in the weather, it has been so hot the past two days. Some days are very much like fall days in Nebraska and the nights have been reasonably cool--at least I've had some cover over me every nite.

Am not yet settled in my domicile but am moving in a bit at a time now. My bed was put up yesterday and I unpacked the sheets and pillow cases, etc.; the desk and dresser are in the room and the rug is down. The walls have been colored with gray color wash. My rug is of matting--about 6 x 9 --with a deep blue border and a blue center design. The desk and dresser are teak-colored about like oak, not a dark wood, tho' it takes a dark stain very satisfactorily. I'm going to have a sort of wardrobe made--there are no closets in the rooms--only I'm going to have curtains in front instead of doors, and the cretonne I got for curtains is a blue and gray striped pattern. Then the Maxfield Parrish pictures you gave me will show up beautifully against the gray walls. Am anxious to move in and live there entirely but we haven't a good place to eat yet, nor do we have a wash woman, so we are living in the Tappan house still.

It has been so nice to have your letters right along. The Frenches who came out with me have had only one letter from home so far, and I've had six from you folks besides one or two others. I almost feel I should share my letters! tho' I haven't done it!

Was so interested in all the news you sent. You spoke once, Ruth, about not worrying and getting a wrinkle. Miss Moninger says 'Worry a lot and build a house on it'! How is the tooth--or teeth--by now?

Language study goes slowly--haven't absorbed much the last two or three days. Will be glad to have a place to study There are no desks or tables in this house where one may sit comfortably for writing or studying, so I know I'm going to appreciate my desk (heaps much'.

You may recall that one of my nurse friends asked me to let her send me a subscription or two this next year, so I'm sending the choices I've made--Atlantic Monthly and Literary Digest. Then I think I will subscribe for Asia, myself. Some one else at the station takes the Post, the Christian Herald, the American, the American Boy, Geographic, S. S. Times, Ladies Home Journal, Time, Christian Century, Good Housekeeping, Popular Mechanics, Golden Book, Nature Magazine, Presbyteruan Magazine, etc., etc. So out of this list I fancy we'll all have as much reading as we'll have time to do. Magazines are passed around here, so it doesn't take so much money from anyone's pocket.

Language study goes on steadily--and is confusing. To illustrate: ae is pronounced as if short e in eh? There are seven tones with separate meanings and sometimes two meanings for one tone.

bae is bèh and is spoken in a low even tone and means 'sick'.
bâe is pronounced the same with a falling inflection and means 'even', 'level', 'smooth'.
báe is pronounced bèh-éh (the broken tone) and is a word used as a classifier, i.e. is always used when the words 'fan' or'wood' are used.
bàe is pronounced with a rising inflection as if asking a question and it means a 'handle'--of a basket or jug, etc.
bāeh is pronounced emphatically but the tone is rather high and prolonged and means 'father'.
baeh is pronounced quickly and sharply and means 'one hundred' or 'to tear'. One determines which by the context of the sentence!
baéh is not quite as high pitched as the above but is short-- and means white.

Now imagine all other vowels and vowel combinations in similar fashion--ba, bai, bau, be, bia, bio, biu, bo boa, boe, bu, bui, bou--and so on down the alphabet. Their alphabet isn't quite as ours either. There are their letters--a, b, ts, d, e, f, ng, h, i, k, kh, l, m, n, o, p, s, t, u, v, z, o-aw as in law, and ae-ein eh, bet, let.

Am getting a headache--it is getting dusk--so better stop using my eyes. Adios--my dears--I love you.

Yours,
Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
October 30, 1930

Dear Ruth:

Your letter of September 23rd received yesterday. If you have been appointed to Mount Pleasant, Michigan, you are perhaps already on the job or en route to it. I have heard pleasant reports about Mount Pleasant but can't recall just what they were specifically! At any rate, should you be appointed, I hope you find a nice group of workers and pleasant surroundings. Will hope to hear more about the project in ensuing letters.

Am not yet in my room. Had hoped to be by now but it so happens that there is no one to stay with the French's in this house should Miss Moninger and I move over to our rooms. Not that anyone really needs to stay here, except that if something should come up in the night there would be no one here who could talk the language. And similarly, I am not to stay alone on the other house! However, I have no fear and would prefer staying in my own bed and room, to living here! But so it goes. Gradually my room is assuming the proportions and appearances of occupancy. Have my books to unpack yet. They will all have to be varnished or shellacked to keep insects from eating the covers.

The coolie can do it. He is skilful at learning things. I think the servants we already have are going to be very good. The coolie has never worked for foreigners bufore but he is bright and apt. His name is Tin Hoa (Tin Hwá) The cook is a cousin of the man who used to cook for families on this compound for years. This former cook now has a bakery in the market and he sells very good bread, pies and cakes, of American make. His cousin--our cook--has been an apprentice in a bake shop and makes bread and cake. Now, he is learning to cook meat and vegetables and to serve meals. He is being taught by the Tappan cook. Our cook's name is Ma Hòng (Mà Haw ng.)--pronounced as if a three-syllable word. He is learning fast and I think will be a good servant. We tho't we had a wash woman but she refused to work--so we are still seeking a woman.

Perhaps you would like to know how our meals are served and the type of food we get. There is much more formality observed here than would ever be used at home. The cook sets the table and puts out an array of silver. For example at breakfast at each place is a small plate, on which is an orange cut in half with seeds removed. The fork is at the left. On the right is the knife, a large spoon for cereal and an orange spoon. The coffee spoon is put on with the coffee. To the left is a bread and butter plate with a butter knife on it. The glass is in its usual place--as is the napkin.

After the fruit is eaten--there are always bananas--and sometimes persimmons or pomelas on the table besides the oranges--the boy removes the plate with the orange and banana skins. He puts down a breakfast plate and a cereal bowl at each place, and places on the table butter and toast and sugar and cream. Then he serves each person with cereal--that, he brings the cereal in a large bowl on a tray to one's left and each person takes as much as desired from the big bowl. After the cereal is finished, the boy removes the bowls and serves, in a similar way, from a tray, either eggs and bacon, or waffles, or whatever is prepared. Then he pours the coffee in the kitchen and serves it to whomever desires it, placing the cup and saucer on the table himself instead of one's taking it from the tray. He keeps the water glasses filled meanwhile and if any cereal or eggs are left serves them as indicated.

That is the typical routine at any meal. It was disconcerting at first but now I'm ~~xxxxxx~~ getting quite used to it.

For cereals we have Cream of wheat, rolled oats or a native puffed rice, which isn't quite as good as American puffed rice but is nice, nevertheless. We can have pancakes or waffles p.r.n. (pro re nate--as desired or indicated!)

The noon meal is the heavy meal of the day--a custom established here because some people do not sleep well after heavy evening meals! We always have meat of some sort--rarely beef, because that is a scarce article here. Chicken is quite often served--it isn't too expensive. Pork can always be had and fish fairly often. Either potatoes or rice is served--never both.

Then there are always two other vegetables served--turnips, bean sprouts, green beans, ~~xx~~ etc. There are many tuber-like vegetables which are nice--rather like turnips in appearance when cooked but with flavor of their own. Then one of the vegetables is usually a green leafy sort--like chard, or spinach, etc. I can't name any of these--most have native names anyway. Then, dessert may be a whipped pudding or-rarely-pie, or fruit, or cake, or a jello-like dessert. Tea is sometimes served, too. The jello is really Agar-agar, Japanese seaweed.

The evening meal consists of soup--one vegetable or some dish such as noodles, or cheese souffle, etc.,--and dessert. It is always a light meal.

Each meal is served in courses by the cook--or the coolie if he is "house-broken"--but the cook is usually expected to do it. Meals usually take some time, as you can see.

The evenings are long. This is because there is practically no dusk. The sun goes down early these days and it is dark by six or six-thirty. We try to have supper at about 6:30 PM. Then there is a long stretch of darkness 'til bedtime. The moonlight nights are gorgeous but its not wise to be out of doors because the ground is pretty well inhabited by creeping things. In the month we've been here four or five snakes have been killed on the compound, two of which were venomous. So--we stay indoors after dark--quite largely.

On Sunday evening the Thomas family and our household had a picnic supper. There is a little pergola outside the east wall of the compound. It is a little octagonal affair of brick with a seat all around the inside. There are trees around it and a little stream below it and is a pretty spot. Will send a picture some day, I hope.

Am sending my films to Hongkong to be finished. It takes a long time to get them back. Have used all but one of those you and Ruth B. gave me but three of them are still in Hongkong!

There are several things I'd like to talk over but don't know how. Christmas gifts--for instance--I'd like to send something to all of you from here, and could afford it, but you'd have to pay duty and it seems like making you pay for your own gifts when from 40 to 75 % of the value of an article must be paid in duty. So if you will forgive the lack of gifts and accept my love for the time being, then next summer in the Philippines I will try to send gifts to all, for there is little or no duty charged from there. Please explain to Alice's folks, too, will you? I have a long list ready of the things I want to buy for all of you when I go to Hongkong and the Philippines next year. You'd really be surprised, I think, if you knew what plans I have for you all.

Am going to try to make one of the other pieces of goods into a dress this week. Cut a pattern from the old dress with

the blue inset in the front of blouse and skirt--and believe I can use it Okeh.

Everyone says we have had a very warm October. It is very sultry lately and very dry for this region. Our teacher, this morning said rain was needed in order to get the fields ready for the next crop of rice. We started yesterday to learn to write characters and to write our names. It is quite an art.

Got my pedometer to working again--don't know what was wrong but took it apart--nearly all of it--and now that it is ammenbled again it "perks" as it should.

There is a funny bird here--the 'hoopo' or some such name. It is about the size of a blackbird--has a long slender bill, a buff colored top-knot with a black and white border. The topknot spreads out like a fan at times. The body is buff and the wings black and white barred. I haven't learned its song or note yet. They dig industriously in the lawn and under the bark of trees and are quite fascinating to watch.

Love to all.

Yours

Esther.

毛鳳羊
Mâu Fōng Mòe

Mâu Fōng Mòe.

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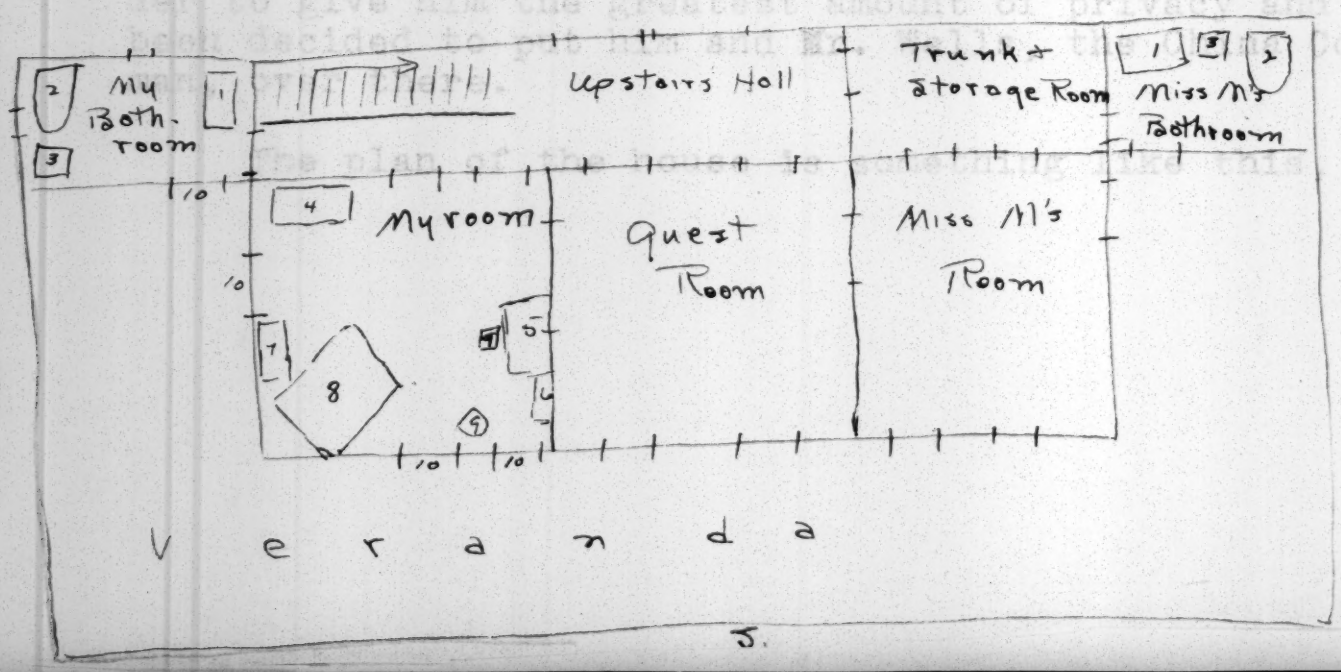
Kachek, Hainan Island.
November 2, 1930

Dear Folks:

Clayton's letter came this week stating that my steamer missives had reached you. I'm waiting quite anxiously now to know if Ruth had been appointed to Mount Pleasant. If she is to be in Michigan I'll write to some of my friends in Michigan to look her up. She may not care especially about it yet I know Myrtle, or Myrna, or Olive Bunce would be glad to see her.

The pictures enclosed will more or less explain themselves. The house I'm to live in is nearly ready for occupancy but we probably won't move in for two weeks more because Dr. [illegible]



E.

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The pictures enclosed will more or less explain themselves. The house I'm to live in is nearly ready for occupancy but we probably won't move in for two weeks more because Dr. Scott, the Board Secretary for China is expected here soon, and in order to give him the greatest amount of privacy and quiet, it has been decided to put him and Mr. Wells, the China Council Chairman, over there.

The plan of the house is something like this, upstairs:

The doors are glass in the upper half and thus constitute the only windows in the rooms. Their positions opposite each facilitate ventilation but make it hard to arrange furniture without having it either in front of, or directly behind, doors. The rooms downstairs are very similar in arrangement. The columns make for a veranda below too, but it is not built up for one except in front of the middle door--see picture--and the east door downstairs. The west room downstairs is the dining room with the kitchen built to the west and north of the main building. The middle room downstairs is the general reception room or parlor. The east room is Miss Moninger's room for meeting and talking with the Chinese women--is really the women's evengelistic headquarters. Miss M. will have the key to the east door and I will have the key to the diningroom door so that each may enter without disturbing the other, if necessary. Back of the house is a little enclosed court where the servants quarters will be--and the laundry. The court has a nice tree in it now and we want to plant another to give more shade. I'm hoping to have some window boxes on the veranda--flower boxes, rather--and perhaps some ferns, and--in due time, perhaps a porch swing. Perhaps, later I maybe able to get some interior views for you, too.

Yesterday, the first of November, was the hottest day I've yet experienced here. But it was a forerunner of a change. It got quite cool during the nite and was raining this AM. Is raining quite hard now. Mr. Tappan says we'll probably have three days of rain and then a spell of nice weather. It is cool today, sure enough--a damp and penetrating chill.

Dr. Bercovitz, Miss Forbes and Mr. McGinnis came down yesterday. Dr. has been coming down each two weeks to look over the medical work and the others came for a little vacation. Miss Forbes is one of the nurses in Hoihow and Mr. McGinnis teaches in Kiungchow. They had to start back in the rain today. I do hope they make it all right--the roads are very slippery when wet.

Had a Hastings Outlook come this week--was rather surprised for I hadn't known I'd let H. C. know where I was to be. Perhaps they learned thro' the Board instead.

Had I written that I have a cat? I said I wanted a yellow cat so last week when Mr. Tappan came back from the port he had one for me,--a scrawny, homely little mutt not yet half grown. I promptly named him Jeremiah--and he lamented true to form all the first night. Now he's happier and is a very affectionate little thing, but so skinny. Even Miss M. thinks he's cute and the coolie, Tin Hoa, likes him, too. He's mostly yellow with white feet and white throat and face. His name at the city, (I learned today) was Sunshine so I guess I'll have to call him Jerry Sunshine!!

Much love to you.

Yours-- Esther Morse

P.S. Bananas cost us 2 lui apiece--that is, one Hainanese dollar will buy 112 bananas and one Hainanese dollar equals about 30 cents American money! We eat all the bananas we want. Wish I could give you some, too.

Esh.

American Presbyterian Mission
Kachek, Island of Hainan
South China
November 9, 1930

Dear Alice and family:

I'm not sure that my letters to the family have been passed on to you but hope you know some of my doings since I last wrote you. We are down here in Kachek now but I'm not yet settled in my room. In a way it is all right because there are still things to be done--my wardrobe is not finished yet and sundry other little things. But on the other hand, I'm so weary of living in other's homes and rooms, and in having no privacy at all. I think Miss Moninger thinks I'm fussy because I want things just so--and because I want so many things that she is willing to do without, but I agree with Mr. Tappan who seconds my wishes in saying that a person is happier and less liable to discontent if (he or) she is surrounded by things she likes and enjoys. So--I'm trying to get my room up-to-date, as I like it. The stiff white lacy-looking material will be the curtains in my room. It is native mosquito-netting with a design in it and is cheap--the starch will wash out and it will be satisfactory tho' it may not wear awfully well. But it won't make much difference because it is 38 cents a yard local currency--that is about 13 cents a yard in U. S. currency. The blue cretonne is to cover my trunk and to make a curtain in front of the open wardrobe. The gray and colored stripe is repeated 3 times in the width of goods and with the gray walls in the room really makes a striking design. This cost $1.80 a yard or about 60 cents in U. S. money. I'm quite proud of it for it really is striking. The picture Edna gave me hangs where the light falls full on it and its colors are a bit lighter than the cretonne and the blue of the rugs, and is a gem of beauty.

Later: Have been to church. Recognized 64 words and phrases from the whole Chinese service. Those who could understand said it was a good sermon. The pastor here seems to be a very able man.

To return to the samples I am enclosing--the green and cream material is a Filipino fabric we are using for curtains in the dining room and living room down stairs. Here the matting is green and tan, too, so the general color scheme is good.

Am enclosing also the films you were wanting. Came across them a few days ago. Now you can have as many prints as you wish.

The foreigners in the mission have a little Sunday service every Sunday PM. We are waiting for the Thomas family to come for the service now. I think I once mentioned their youngsters as being exceptionally well behaved. I retract that statement! They are very ordinary in their behavior--mischievous etc. The usual old maids perogative I exercise when I feel that the parents are too lenient!! I like the next to the youngest--Bobby--aged 4~~0~~ about the best--and he happens to be the naughtiest too!!

The baby is sweet and growing so fast--has two teeth and I suppose we are all as interested as the parents, even.

I like Mr. Tappan the best of anyone here, I think. He is quiet but firm, and fixed in his ideas and convictions regarding the Chinese. He is clear thinking and tolerant. His wife is nice, too but doesn't seem as strong a character as he--that is, not as far as judgment goes--and talks a lot. He was a bachelor on the field from 1906 to 1921 and, while very much married, still seems to retain some of the characteristics that must have been dominant in his years alone.

I like Dr. Bercovitz, too--tho' I trust his judgment less than I do Mr. Tappans.

Miss Moninger is a very strong-minded woman under a soft and rather appealing exterior. Her judgments is goody too, I would say, regarding the problems we face here. She has too much energy to suit me and as our Language Study supervisor keeps on our trail and insists we do certain things and study in certain ways and at certain times.--which is arduous for me. I hope, when I'm in my own room to study more as I choose. She doesn't want us to even think of language study at nite and then fills the rest of our day so full there is no other time and then 'jumps' us if we do try to study at night. So--lately I've just folded my hands and said 'All right, Language--soak in if you can' and I'm not studying a bit except when the Chinese teacher is here. I hope, as I say, to do differently when I have the privacy of my own room.

Do write--all of you--and let me know everything about all of you. Much love to all--

Yours,

Esther

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Kachek, Island of Hainan
November 16, 1930

Dear Folks:

The last letter from you folks arrived on the 7th, just a month from the time it had been written. Most of my mail from you is arriving in just about that time, sometimes five or six weeks but usually a month. How long does it seem to take for my letters to reach you? Longer than a month, I presume, for a letter mailed in the interior may lay in the port for several days before a steamer calls to take it off.

I'm still wondering about the Mt. Pleasant job but hope all is settled and Okeh now. Ruth, your trip to Seattle sounds interesting You mentioned Frank's moving--are they going to live with Mr. Brengan? And, having met Ruth Brehm's Romeo, what is your impression of him? Yes, I think Ruth has developed--I hoped she continues in her work for a while. It will do more for her than marriage just now.

We've just had a very exciting two or three days. Dr. Scott, the Board Secretary arrived in Hainan on Wednesday, the 12th, and was brought down here the next day. We had been expecting him for a month and it was a big relief to have his visit and get it over with. This is the first time in over fifteen years that a Board Secretary has ever visited the island. We are rather inaccessible by boat, so we're usually passed by! Everyone was determined to have Dr. Scott see not only the good but the deficiencies in the work, too I think that on the whole his impressions were favorable and outweighed the bad impressions he may have had of some things. For days before he came everyone was busy getting things in readiness--foreigners and Chinese, also They--Dr. Scott, Mr. Wells of the China Council, Dr. Crawford who has worked in Soochow for thirty years and- Dr. Veach of New Jersey, a religious education expert--arrived in Kachek about 2:30 PM on Thursday. Dr. Bercovitz and Dr Chu came down too, Dr. Chu to act as interpreter for the men who do not speak Hainanese. That same afternoon they visited the school and looked about the compound a little. All were struck by the tropical aspect of the place and the many palm trees. I've been here long enough to sort of take them for granted now, but I saw them all over again thro' their eyes.

The service for dedicating the new hpspital was held Friday noon, and lasted from 12:00 to 2:45 PM. It is customary to ask officials and visitors to speak and so there were fourteen speeches, most of them quite long and all but three were in Hainanese. Heard a speech with an interpreter used, for the first time and it goes quite smoothly--more than I had anticipated. Of the Hainanese, I understood about 85 words and phrases, an increase of 45 over a month previous. Not much--it's true, but a bit of a gain. After the service, there was a deafening roar and clatter of firecrackers outside--the Chinese way of expressing joy.

Then we went over to the new hospital--tea was served in the administration building and then visitors were shown thro' the new hospital. We haven't many patients now--perhaps twenty but this is a large field and we look to have the place filled in about a years time.

After this the men talked over the plans and requirements necessary for completing the second wing of the hospital. I was much interested and it was my province to be present, too, but it wasn't seemly, especially to the Chinese, for a woman to go around with eight or ten men, and so I went with the women albeit anxious about the whole plan myself.

At four o'clock the Chinese Christians gave a feast for all of us and for many of their number and a few of the non-Christian officials of the city. This was my first Chinese feast tho' I'd had Chinese food before. I'll try to describe it as faithfully as I can. There were five women and one man at our table--Miss Moninger; Mrs. French; Tsŏk Si, matron of the hospital workers; Lí Tun Hoa, Bible woman for the women patients at the hospital; Zóng Hoa who has been carrying on the dispensary work in the absence of a doctor and he is very clever with his fingers,

Board of Foreign Missions of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
Fiscal Agency of the China Missions

會老長

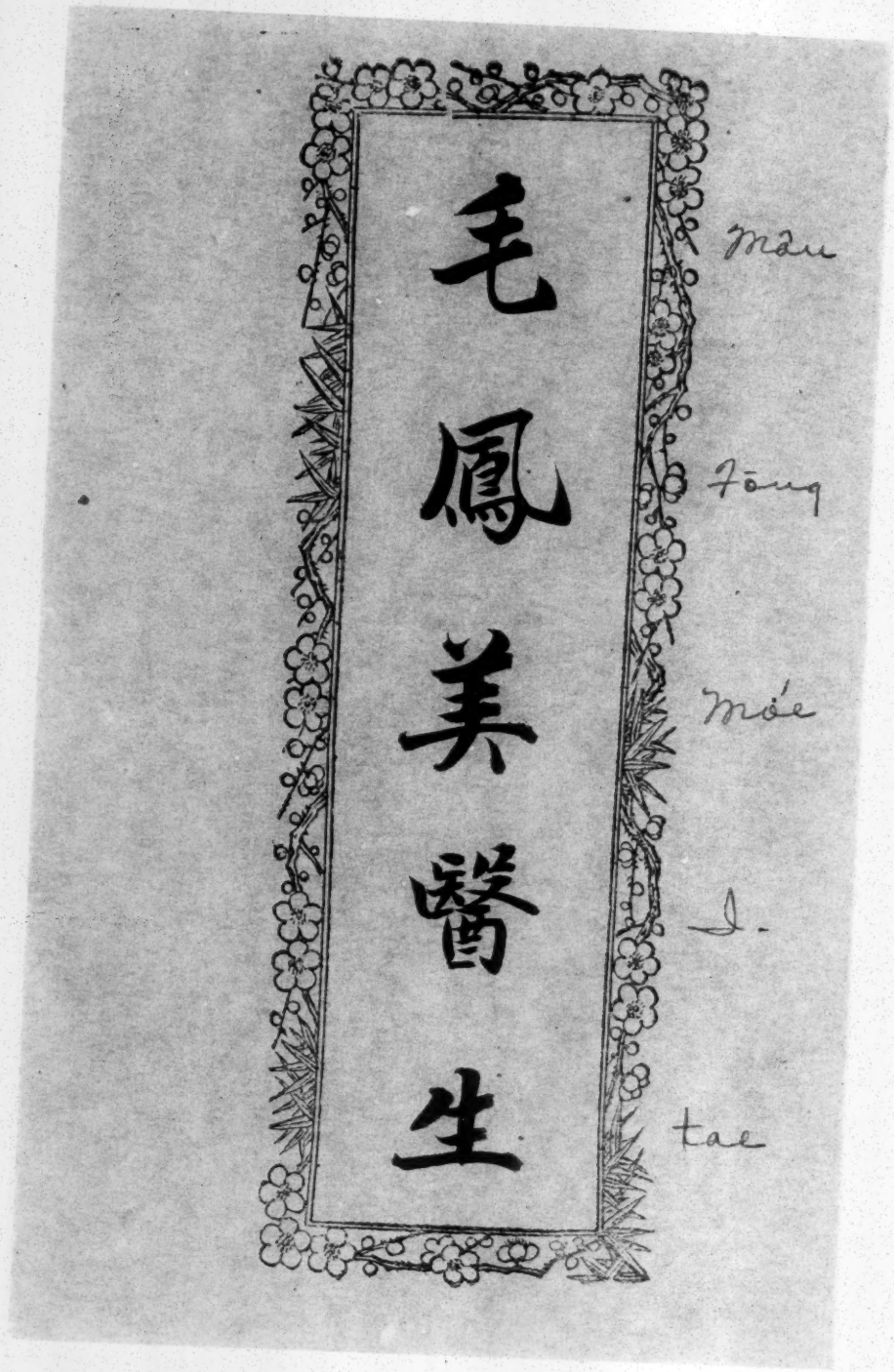
Pay Dr. Esther Morse

One Merry Christmas and One Happy New Year

C. M. Meyers
General Treasurer

Associated Mission Treasurers
Shanghai
China

Associate Treasurer



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Board of Foreign Missions of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
Fiscal Agency of the China Missions

Pay ___Dr. [illegible] Morse___

One Merry Christmas and One Happy New Year

Associated Mission Treasurers
Shanghai
China

General Treasurer

Associate Treasurer

教

本月十四日下午四句鐘潔樽候

This Month 14th day afternoon 4th hour of the clock clean cups are waiting

嘉積教會同人敬約

Kachek church people respectfully invite

席設本會講堂

The feast is spread in the local church chapel

恕不催請

Pardon this unceremonious invitation

Board of Foreign Missions of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
Fiscal Agency of the China Missions

Pay Dr. [illegible] Morse

One Merry Christmas and One Happy New Year

Associated Mission Treasurers
Shanghai
China

General Treasurer

Associate Treasurer

同席單

a born surgeon but without education; and myself. Tsŏk Si, Zong Hoa and Tun Hoa are all from the same district and are very friendly to one another naturally. On the table when we sat down were bananas, small oranges, peeled and quartered, dishes of watermelon seeds and a dish of pickled turnips. At each place was a handle-less Chinese tea cup and a tiny dish of vinegar. Oh, yes, there was also a dish of the gelatine dessert they use here--agar-agar, or Japanese seaweed. There were also, at each place a large-bowled short-handled China spoon and a pair of chopsticks. After munching watermelon seeds and bananas a while the courses began to be served and these are they: (1) Shark's fins (2) Birds nest soup (3) Abalone (4) Steamed chicken (5) Steamed wild duck (6) Mushrooms (7) Pig's bones served with a sour-sweet sauce and onions (8) Tripe (9) Sea ginseng (10) oysters (11) peas and chicken (12) Cuttlefish (octopus) (13) Eight precious fruits pudding (14) sweet soup (15) Fish stomachs (16) chicken (17) Soft boiled rice.

In each case a big bowl of the article was bro't in and each person took his chopsticks, or spoon, and selected the piece he wished and ate it, and then dipped in again. Of course the soups required the spoons instead of chopsticks. I wasn't awfully adept with the latter but managed to make out a fair meal. I liked it all except the tripe, the sea ginseng, and the sweet soup. I wasn't very crazy about the abalone, the cuttlefish or the fish stomachs, tho' it wasn't bad, and I could learn to like it. The best thing was the pig's bones in the sour-sweet sauce. These were little rib bones cut in about inch lengths and cooked crisp and then served in a hot sweet vinegar sauce such as mama used to occasionally make for sliced onions. And it was good, yum!yum! The dish I liked next best was peas and chicken. But it was all good and I'm ever so glad I could go to a genuine Chinese feast. The oysters were especially good--not fresh but dried oysters, cooked up with a rich broth. I enjoyed them so much and had such difficulty getting them with my chopsticks that Zong Hoa several times fished out nice morsels for me with his chopsticks! But--germs or no germs--I suffered no ill effects from the feast.

After the feast there was a meeting of the whole mission that lasted for about three hours. Believe me, I was glad to go to bed. The next AM I was up at 6:00 to watch Dr. Bercovitz do a plastic operation on a hare-lip. Then a waffle breakfast, a few pictures, and the whole visiting group started off for Hoihow where there is more inspecting and speechmaking to do. The visitors will probably leave the island about Wednesday--11/19/30

The enclosed red card was my invitation to the feast. I have put the translation beside the characters. The I-tae means doctor. They know me only by my name Mâu--even my teacher asked the other day what my name was and had a little difficulty in saying the 'r' in it. I think my name has rather pretty characters--especially the first two 毛鳳

A funeral procession went by this AM but we didn't see it in time to get any pictures. There will undoubtedly be others.

Mr. French caught a grasshopper in the gardenthis AM that measured 3½ inches--not bad, as grasshoppers go, eh, what?

Much love to you all--

Yours-- Esther Morse

. . . . . .

Kachek, Island of Hainan
November 24, 1930

Dear Folks:

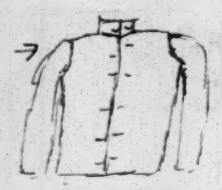
Am rather weary today--tho' yesterday wasn't a heavy day. Went to church as usual and then the Frenches had dinner with us. In the afternoon the foreigners had their usual Sunday service. Mrs. Thomas read a sermon from the Presbyterian Banner. Each of us must take a turn at conducting the service so my time will inevitably come! In the evening we all gathered at the Thomas home to listen to the Victrola for a while. This is about the only chance we have to hear music and it is most welcome occasionally.

Miss Moniger has a folding organ, and the church organ stays at the French home on week days (the house is less damp than the church and the keys will stick less there), and Thomas' have a victrola. These are our sources of music in this station.

Out at Hoihow there are three pianos and someone to play them. There used to be a piano here but it was ruined by the looters several years ago.

WE've lived in our own quarters for a week and it is good to be here. The bed I ordered in New York is simply 'scrumptious'. I scarcely know I have a sore back anymore! These many beds I've slept in since the first of June have rather played havoc with my lame back and it was very sore for about two weeks before we moved here. Now I feel much, much better.

I feel moved to talk about clothes. The women here wear black trousers and coats- Occaskonally a blue or white coat is worn--but always a coat. Underneath they wear one or more similarly made coats--of white or light material--the number depending on the weather. The men wear trousers --black or blue or white, or striped. If they are long trousers they are very full and loose in the seat and are folded over in front to make a pleat and the whole affair is held up by a cord or belt or tie around the waist. Workmen often roll up the wide legs of the trousers above the knees to facilitate motion. If the trousers are not long--ankle length or so--they are very short--not even knee length--but somewhere between knee and hip --and are usually tighter than the long trousers. Men wear a coat, too, sometimes made just like a women's coat, only not so long, or else it is made so (over)

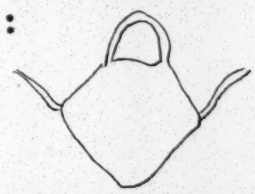


--but the other type is more prevalent among older men. The coat buttoning down the front is a student's garment, apparently. Workmen wear all sorts of garments for shirts or coats but gauze or knit shirts such as serve for undershirts at home are quite favorites--and they feel quite dressed up in them! In warm weather they often wear no shirts at all and as abbreviated nether garments as possible. Only educated persons wear stockings--and not always then! What started this discussion was our cook's appearance while he served lunch. He had on some very short "shorts"--at least 6 inches of leg above the knee being much in evidence, as well as all that below the knee. He never wears stockings--or shoes in the house. He wears wooden shoes when he goes to market. He had on a short white jacket while serving the meal. Then it was taken off while he washed dishes and then he had on a gauze undershirt with the tail worn over his trouser.

"Shorts" are acceptable garments in this part of the world--for the foreigner as well as the Chinese. When worn by foreigners usually the stockings are fastened just below the knee. Undoubtedly they are cooler--but there is nothing in their appearance to justify them, and usually nothing in the appearance of what is contained in them!--knobby knees, hairy legs, legs meant for wear in the saddle rather than afoot, legs of every kind and variety.

I didn't know I was pernickety about men's attire until I saw white men in 'shorts'!

Children's attire out here varies from the birthday garment kind to complete copies of the attire of their elders. Little girls usually are completely and adequately clothed after they reach the 'broken' age. Up to then, whether babes in arms or toddlers they have on one or more shirts made like the mother's and a little apron affair like this:



which ties in the back. Otherwise their clothes 'ain't'. After they are older the little boys wear 'splits'--pants without any seats--just a band and some legs--and a little shirt or coat, still made like the mother's. Schoolboys wear regular western-style pants and the student coats--white in warm weather and dark blue in cold weather.

And anyone who speaks of the 'human form divine' is just full of "boloney"--again, there ain't none such--I never saw any at home nor any here. The nearest one can come to it is the child of 3 or 4 after he is past the pot-bellied age and before he gets into gangling age. After that--vo toh dit--as they say here--it can't be done!

Am hoping for American mail today--haven't heard from you for some time.

In case this reached you about Christmas time please know that my very best Christmas wishes go to all of you--individually and collectively.

Yours always--- Esther Morse

P. S: The enclosed snapshots were taken about a month ago. The group was taken at five PM--after the sun had just slipped behind the western hill and out of our view. It was a bulb exposure and is very good I think. Tsok Si, sitting on my right, is a perfect jewel--tho' she looks very like a monkey. Mr. Loe (Loy) next to Miss Moninger is our language teacher and I like him 'heaps much'. All these Chinese are very fine responsible Christian people.

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Kachek, Island of Hainan.
November 25, 1930

Dear Jess and Family:

It has occurred to me that if I wish to send any Christmas greeting to you I'd better get them on the way. It is a little hard to anticipate greetings a whole month, and more ahead. However, I'm wishing everyone of you a very Happy Christmas season and the best of prospects for health and happiness in the New Year.

It doesn't seem much like Thanksgiving weather here--am wearing a sleeveless dress today--indoors--and am comfortable. The gardens are growing nicely--tomatoes have been transplanted and radishes are nearly large enough to eat. The grass is green everywhere but it is rather dry for the rice-planting. The farmers are needing rain again. Just this morning our teacher was asking prices of windmills in the catalogs--he would like to order one for his village--to supply the rice fields with water during the fall and spring planting seasons. We tried to tell him it was impracticable because of the typhoons which sweep the country in the summer--a windmill would hardly stand such a wind--but he preferred a windmill to a gasoline pump because "gasoline is too dear and the wind cost nothing". He has nothing if not an eye for business, eh, what?

The hospital is filling up with maternity cases--we have one ward filled now and more to come. This is a great delight to me--that more women are coming in now that they have heard there are women doctors here to care for them. At present there are not many men in the hospital--it is the rice planting season and they haven't time to be ill! After China New Year we will probably have many persons of both sexes in the hospital.

Had I ever described the cattle here in Hainan? There are several kinds of them. The most prevalent are the water buffalo--big bulky animals with shaggy heads and wide spreading horns. Their hair is rather scanty and a grayish-blackish mixture and the skin shows thro' as a black shiny surface. They are quite likely to be ill-tempered tho' not necessarily. One sometimes sees a string of several led across the plain--the rope thro' the nose of one fastened to the tail of the buffalo ahead, and the leading buffalo carrying the herder--often a very small lad.

Down here the buffalo milk is never used for human consumption, but up in Soochow it has been found quite useful. It has a very high fat content and may be boiled to sterilize it, without destroying the cream for either butter or whipping-cream use. It would be fine if we could have something of the sort. At present we are all using Carnation and Eagle Brands of tinned milk.

Other cattle are those with a hump on the shoulders but otherwise very like our polled Durhams at home. They are believed to be a cross between the zebu, or Brahmin, cattle of India and some domesticated breed bro't here long ago by foreigners. They are essentially a beef type and are very sleek, nice-looking animals. Some of these, as well as the water buffalo, are used as beasts of burden but in general their use is for the food supply of the island--or to be shipped elsewhere.

Pigs are everywhere and are such funny looking animals--everyone is sway-backed and as they get very fat they really should have rollers under their stomachs!

Had I told you I have a yellow and white kitten who bears the name of Jeremiah? He loves the kitchen and crawls into the charcoal stove as the fire dies down. Consequently he is very dirty and has his whiskers and eyebrows singed down very short--but he's a cute kitten nevertheless. My teacher says--"Dr. Mau loves Jeremiah very much."!!

Enough of this nonsense--now. Let me hear from all of you --sometime. Love to all of you. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours--
Esther Morse

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Kachek,
November 30, 1930

Dear Dad:

I don't know how long I'll be able to keep at this letter but I'm going to get started anyway. Dr. Bercovitz and Mr. Steiner came down from Hoihow yesterday and the doctor said he was going over to the hospital this AM about 7:00 and would I bring my blood pressure apparatus over and my blood counting apparatus, too, So, I'm up and waiting to see or hear him go over. It's awfully nice to have visitors but it seems we haven't had anything else down here since I've been here and I'm getting tired of having folks around--they upset routine so much! I suppose everyone else on the compound would kill me if I made any such remarks to them--they being all more gregarious than I!

This has been an interesting but tiring week--for some reason. Of course, the big day was Thanksgiving Day. We had rather expected and planned for some of the folks from Hoihow to be here then but illness there prevented their coming. So the folks here all had dinner together--each family contributing something to the feast. This was our menu--soup, roast

duck, peanut and raisin dressing, gravy, mashed potatoes, creamed peas, one native vegetable, bread and butter and jam pickled peaches, olives, tomato jelly salad with fresh radishes from the garden, raisin pie and coffee. I had to sit up very straight about the time of the salad course, but bravely ate all that was put before me!

After dinner we said an American mail would top off the day just right--and sure enough, here it came--four letters for me and about a dozen for Miss Moninger and the same for the Frenches. We were all very happy you may be sure. I heard from each of you at Puyallup. Speaking of descriptive ability, you're not so bad yourself, in describing the trees and hillsides since the frost! Hope the policy money reached you Okeh-and am glad it could be as much. Am glad you've heard from-Stuart folks. I wrote to Mr. Caldwell a rather generalized letter for the S. S: if he wished it--wrote it the first of this month. Wrote also to the Cleveland S.S. thro' Mrs. C. It may be one or the other of these letters may have gone to the Advocate--if not, I'll be glad to send one to you for that purpose-soon. I'm hoping your headache may surely let up as the cold weather comes on. And don't work too much, if that makes your head hurt.

About 4:45 PM on Thanksgiving day we had our service at Mr. French's. He had charge of the service and it was a very good one. After it was over we all came over to our house and had sandwiches, cake and tea and played a few games. All in all it was quite a nice Thanksgiving Day--warm and sunny all day.

Am enclosing a picture of a few of the youngsters in Hainan. The Thomas children are the only ones on this compound now, tho' this is the regular station for the Tappan's,too. The Seatons are in Nodoa, now. They are nice children--all of them. Peter Bercovitz is about Bobby Thomas' age and Betty Steiner is Jean's age, but I couldn't find them the day I took this picture and didn't want to wait, for a gang of kids scatters like down in a wind. This was the only time I could get even this many together. Isn't Wallace a sweet baby--he's only a little over two.

The Chinese are not at all averse to asking very personal questions. It is customary for callers to ask your age, if your parents are living, how many brothers and sisters you have, if they are married, what is their business, and so on. If you buy anything they want to know the price, or how long you have had it and so on. How long have you gone to school, does it take much money in America to go to school, in what province (state) do you live, is it far away and on and on and on!

The other day my teacher asked about you and mother. I told him mother wasn't living--that you were living with my brother. He wanted to know how many were in my brother's house and was surprised when I mentioned just you folks there. Isn't he married? How old is he? Is he your only brother? Then your father has no son's son? And he shook his head sadly. It is a sad thing here for a man not to have sons and grandsons and he

couldn't see that it is perfectly okeh, for a man not to marry if he isn't so disposed. His concern was laughable to me--finally he said, 'Promise that you will write to your brother and urge him to marry--he is not too old.' I laughed and laughed. Fancy my urging Clayton to marry! But I tho't I'd like to tell you how concerned he is about the situation. I told him that we were all proud of Clayton, as is--but he said 'He should marry'. I'm still laughing at his concern! The teacher is 40 and has a married son--no grandson yet!

The Chinese, also, think we are all wealthy because we live in such large houses and in comfort quite unknown to them. Miss Moninger said it was a good idea to let the teacher know how long one had gone to school and that one had had to work to get thro'. So one day when he was asking questions I told him the various things I had done while going to school. He listened in amazement. Finally he said, 'I tho't you were rich and had never worked before coming out here, but I see you have worked.' I think it gave him something to think about anyway! and he will pass it on to others, don't doubt! He counted up when I told the number of years I'd gone to school--and it makes an impressive total, sure enough, to these folks who revere learning! Twenty-one years!

My national Board Certificate arrived yesterday and I showed it to Dr. Bercovitz. He said 'Let me feel it--one of the most coveted things in American medicine today and the only one on the island here.'--and he offered me his congratulations. I'm awfully glad I have it, too--tho' it has represented considerable hard work.

Thanks for the Snicker Snacks and Similes--they are very apt and quite hit the spot--especially, nothing disturbs a woman's poise like avoirdupois!

Much love to you--and a happy Christmas season with an abundantly joyous prospect for the New Year---

Yours--
Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
November 30, 1930

Dear Ruth:

This is the last chance I'll have to write to you in November 1930--so I'm going to grab the chance so hard it can't even wiggle. Was very glad for your letter of Oct. 22. Does my news seem stale to you when you get it? Well, yours never is that way to me--it sounds fresh from the press. I was hoping with you that you'd have the appointment by the time you wrote--hope its all Okeh now.

If I haven't sent any message to the Glabais in my former

letters I want to do so now surely. Give them my heartiest greetings and tell Mrs. G. I often think of her good cooking--just the other day I was thinking of that delicious red cabbage we had that last meal with them.

The news from Pierre was interesting. Miss Chapin at Kiungchow is from Urbana, or that adjacent town in Illinois--oh, yes, Champaign--and I tho't I ought to know someone from there and after a while I tho't of Berry and mentioned her--on a wild premise that Miss Chapin might know her and she does, tho' memory is rather vague, now, I judge. Will be interested in all the changes at Pierre--suppose Sonnie and Berry are still there. How about Ray, Muntzell and Flanagan? And did you see the Whitlock's?

No, I can't beat the blush definition! And its being written in red made it all the more effective! as if a "superabundance of haimoglobin" was turgidifying the words and causing the 'suffused radiance'! You beat me to the use of the red ribbon--I had promised myself to type a 'red' letter to you the next time I borrowed the French's typewriter. I rather like it.

This has been a lovely day--bright and sunny--actually quite warm--but not as sweltering a day, by far, as the first day of this month--that was the hottest we'd had here. When Dr. Bercovitz and Mr. Steiner started back to Hoihow, Mr. Thomas and family in his car and Frenches and myself in the Tappan car accompanied them for 10 or 15 miles--oh maybe not that far either--but anyway we went for the ride. It was the first time either Mrs. F. or I had been off the compound for that long since we came down here. Was quite an enjoyable ride.

The enclosed stamps are for your collection--if you are making one--if not, send them to someone who is. Since I began collecting stamps for Dr. Gordon last year I notice every stamp I see. I'm sending her a bunch that is almost an exact duplicate of this one. The Hongkong stamps are what come on my films and prints. I received the portrait attachment yesterday that I ordered--got it for $2.15 Mex.--or about 70 cents gold.

Miss Moninger has a folding organ and is playing hymns now. I've tried to play on it and find it takes much more pumping to give enough air than the regular xxxxxx size organ--otherwise it is rather nice and has a good tone. Miss M. plays better than anyone else in the station--Mrs. French and I are in about the same class!

Had a nice letter from Dr. Marjorie Roach this week announcing her engagement to Dr. Gilman in Philadelphia. I'm very happy about it all--I saw that romance begin and grow and while I didn't care much for Dr. Gilman at first I came to like him, too, as I knew him better.

Dr. Bercovitz here, amuses and annoys me both. He wants me to do lots of things at the hospital and I'm glad to, only the Language Committee doesn't want me to and they hop on me if I spend too much time over at the hospital--and I want to follow

Dr. B's suggestions, so he tells me to do it on the q.t.! And thats an impossibility with everyone in the station knowing your every act. One's only privacy is in one's room--if then! So I'm to try to figure out some middle way--to please both Dr. B. (whose wishes I wish to follow) and the Language Committee (whose word is Law!)!! Some job.

Oh, I found this--how do you like it?

An Alley Cat--by Nancy Byrd Turner

Mangy and gaunt I walk the tiles tonight,
And mangy comes my lady to her tryst;
But nine lives back (nine hundred, some have guessed)
With prouder mien we rambled, ranging light.
Sacred and sleek, on roofs of amethyst
And eaves of ivory we wandered, while
A lotus-colored moon swung up the Nile,
And Memphis slumbered in a silver mist.

O it was heaven just to sit and be
Antiphonal beceath some royal room
Until, for all our sacredness, we heard
Loud, hieroglyphic curses flowing free,
And marked a sandal hurtling thro' the gloom
Hot from the hand of Rameses the Third!

Not bad, eh?
And that makes me think--I gave our cat--Jeremiah--a bath yesterday. He was a most surprised and disgusted cat! But it didn't seem to hurt him--he only sought another charcoal heap--and now he needs another bath!

Must go to Sunday afternoon service--Mrs. French is in charge today. Adios my dear. A happy holiday season and a successful New Year. My love is yours--

Always yours--

Esther Morse

P.S. Will you subscribe--or whatever one does--to a Book-of-the-Month-Club, for me and send the bill to me, please? I think I'll need something of that sort to keep in touch with current literature. Thanks.

Yours--

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Kachek, Hainan Island
December 8, 1930

Dear Folks:

I feel as if it had been ages since I had written to you--probably because I didn't write on Sunday. I just wasn't up to it that day.

A week ago yesterday I felt pretty punk and on Tuesday had my first genuine attack of malaria. I was sorry to have it at all, but do not regret the experience, for now I can sympathize more thoroly with other sufferers. I don't believe even the 'flu' can make ones bones ache any worse. Fortunately I had no chills but my fever reached 101° in the afternoon. The next day I was Okeh, only tired, but have a had a little trouble with my eyes since. Consequently, I didn't study very much all week.

On Wednesday had an invitation to a Chinese wedding--the family is not Christian tho' the father has been an inquirer for many years, but has never presented himself for examination. He wanted his son to have a Christian marriage ceremony and the foreigners were invited too. Everyone was happy about his decision over the ceremony--and the Chinese said that in the evening, after the foreigners had gone, the father made a very strong appeal for the gospel, to the men gathered at the wedding feast. But I didn't attend the wedding after all--it being too soon after the fever, for one thing, rainy weather for a second, and a long walk over muddy rice fields for a third. However, Mr. French and Mr. Thomas went--and reported a good time. An interesting thing about these invitations--Mrs. French and Mrs. Thomas received no invitation, tho' Miss Moninger and I each did. Apparently, the Chinese consider the unmarried women the heads of their own houses! The proper way to express ones regret at not being able to attend a wedding, is to return the invitation--which I did with much regret for I had wanted to show it to you.

We had rainy weather from Tuesday to Saturday, inclusive but even so it is too dry for the rice planting. If there isn't more rain within the next three weeks the crop will be ruined. The tiny rice plants must grow in water at first. The farmers are quite discouraged. If they do not get a crop this season it will be the third successive season a failure has occurred. Last season there was too much rain, the time before that there wasn't enough rain. The farmer has a tough break whether he lives in Nebraska or Hainan, eh?

Sunday we had three of the Chinese girls at our house for dinner. They handled knives and forks pretty well considering their unfamiliarity with them. Then we showed them the pictures of our families--they asked all about you folks--your families, your ages, your occupations, etc.--which is polite to do. They tho't I looked like mother and am 'bui'--fat--like her! They seemed to like our rooms, too--I had previously promised Dr. Lee to have her see my room sometime for I had been up to hers.

Today we had a Chinese dinner. I have wanted one in order to learn to use chopsticks in the privacy of my own dining room and not at some feast! So we had a vegetable (similar to cabbage when cooked), rice, and 'si-hun' (see-hoo-n). This latter is a stringy noodle-like stuff made of the same vegetable. It is <u>very</u> good--but fancy eating it with chopsticks! It had some meat cooked with it today--there are a variety of ways of fixing it.

I made out fairly well--so much so that the cook said I was 'oe' (oy) or 'skillful'! The dessert was typically American, tho'--lemon pie! This boy does make the best pie! Tonight he tried to make cheese puff for the first time--it was only fair, he made it a bit too thick, I think. Cheese is something they don't have and have no word for it so they try to imitate our words and call it "chees-ee". One of the cooks on the compound, whose cheese puff is above reproach, tickles us half silly by his pronunciation of it--he calls it "chees--ee pup." They have no equivalent for pie either and call it 'fie'. I don't know why they don't sound the 'p' in it.

Clayton's letter about Ruth's appointment and your trip to Starbuck came last Friday--12/5/30. Was very glad to know about it. Hope Ruth had a good trip east and is finding happy surroundings in Mt. Pleasant. Looked it up on the atlas and find it probably is near the edge of the pine lands of the southern peninsula--wonder how near I'm right. Am hoping for a letter from her in the next American mail.

We are due to have our first examination in the language tomorrow. I haven't studied very much, but my teacher told me this AM not to be afraid--so I'm trusting his judgment! I really don't want to use my eyes too much for a while, either, and that's no fooling!

Am feeling Okeh now and sleeping and eating fine--so don't worry about a little malaria. I'll probably have it again some day--but not if I can help it! I'll take quinine now if I have a single ache in one of my toe joints!! Boy, how my ears did ring for a day or so!

Best wishes to all of you and much happiness in the New Year. My love to you.

Yours---Esther Morse

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Kachek
December 9, 1930

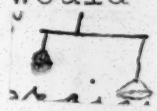
Dear Dad:

Have a few scraps of paper--will put down a few scraps of news!

We had our test this afternoon, It wasn't awfully hard--I finished it in about an hour and a quarter. Mrs. French was thro' before me about 20 minutes.

Went out to the market with Miss M. about 4 PM--this wasn't Market day so it was very quiet. Every other day is known as Market day--then people from all the surrounding countryside come here with their produce--or, to buy. On such days there are thousands of people here. To look down the street on market day gives the same impression as the streets of Stuart on Tri-County Day--and then some! One can see all sorts of things, truly.

We went thro' the meat market the other day. You recall when we

went thro' the Public Market in Seattle, together. This reminded me of it. Rows and rows of stone slabs with meat spread on them and quarters and ribs and so on, hanging above. No protection from dust of flies but even so, a sort of order in the place--and the meat looked good, too. The salesman would cut a piece off and weigh it on the scales made lik-a so:  (The meat here is all cut with the grain). Then a bit of bamboo is thrust thro the meat and off the purchaser goes to the next place, his meat carried so a streak of lean and a streak of fat swinging from the loop! Our cook brings our meat home that way, too!

There is lots of salt fish sold here and the fish markets are always recognizable by odor long before one reaches them! One can get fresh fish here, too--occasionally.

The vegetable section of the market was very enticing--lovely big cucumbers, gorgeous turnips, large and pretty eggplant, lettuce and celery, (which we dare not eat because it is fertilized with all sorts of germ laden water and material) besides many native vegetables.

Everywhere one sees huge baskets of garlic, ginger roots, soy beans, bean curd, etc.

On one street we can watch the process of making native mattresses or comforters, we would call them. They take raw cotton and pile a heap of it on the stone floor. A man has a sort of bow which be swings over the heap. He strikes it, the bow string with a mallet and the vibration draws the cotton fibers apart and raises them up to the bow. When the cotton is quite fluffy it is pressed down and the process repeated. This is done again and again, each time the cotton becoming more and more fluffy and the final mass is many times the size of the original heap. Then a fine woven netting is placed over it and it is folded ready for sale. The rhythmic thud of the mallet on the bow is characteristic and is as interesting as it is monotonous to hear.

The enclosed card shows a street restaurant--this is very characteristic--only a trifle more elaborate than many. Some are merely the kettles in which the rice--or whatever it is--is cooked with a stack of rice bowls beside it.

The other day we saw three cats bro't in in baskets for sale. One was a half grown white kitten in a basket by itself, protesting with voice and claws at the indignity of being thus carried and observed. The others were two small yellow and white kittens about the size of my Jeremiah--but infinitely cleaner than he is! I've washed him and tried to keep him clean but there are too many charcoal stoves in the neighborhood--to exclude him from our kitchen but sends him elsewhere! But ~~xix~~ he's a nice cat--is Jeremiah! even tho' dirty!

Miss Moninger just told me I did fairly well on the examination. I made the usual number of 'dumb' mistakes--of course.

There is a mission meeting tonite so will have to go and sit for an hour or so. I haven't any idea what it will be about either. I'm not a voting member yet--won't be until I've completed language study, I believe--so these meetings aren't wildly exciting affairs for me!

My teacher had fever on Sunday and another chill yesterday, while he was out in the market. He went to a tea-shop for a hot drink, thinking to allay his chill a bit until he could get back to his room and to bed. In coming down the stairs from the tea-room (which are always on the second storey) his legs trembled so that he fell, skinning and wrenching his left arm considerably. He was so humiliated, lest some one think he had been drinking, which he never does. I said 'O, what a shame!' when he told me--but that only made things worse for that ejaculation only intensified his feeling of shame for having fallen! That expression doesn't have quite the same meaning here as we usually think of its having! So I had to make a fuss over him in other words to soothe his ruffled feelings!!

Made my will today--we all should have one here because if there is none, in the event of one's death the consul handles all affairs and sells all ones possessions--the family have no rights apparently. So I made a will--stating that the medical books and equipment should go to the hospital here. All else should go to Alice--for I want her to have (and she wants) the family pictures. Aught else she can dispose of to others as she chooses. But by having only one person named it will save trouble for executors here and will more or less facilitate matters there too, I'd imagine.

I hope this will meet with your approval. Please do tell me what you think for I can change this easily at any time.

Must say Adios--I love you.

Your
Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
December 14, 1930

Dear Edna:

I've just had a letter from your mother this week but had planned to write to you so will keep to that plan, feeling sure the news will reach all the family anyway--then will write to her a little later.

Clayton also mentioned the good time you all had together the week Faye and Blaine were in Starbuck. It must have been mighty nice to have so much excitement all at once! Our excitement here consists in getting American mail!

Had I written that we had an examination in the language last week? It wasn't bad, really. Fortunately my characters

were all right but the story I had to write was rather red-marked when it came back. The topic was 'A Church Service.' I tried to tell that the men sat on one side and the women on the other, that Mr. Tappan's dog always goes to church and sleeps thro' the service, that sometimes a horse comes and looks in the open door, and that the preacher always talks a long time, tho' his points are always very good. The clause about the horse was a total'washout'!

Last Wednesday Miss Moninger, Mrs. French, two Chinese Bible women and myself went to call on some Christians in a village about two miles away. It was a bright warm afternoon and the walk was nice. The path led between rice fields and as the fields are never regularly laid out, we meandered here and yon and hither before we finally reached the first home. Rice must be grown in water, of which there is still too little at present. The fields are separated by earth dykes which are about two or three feet wide and about eighteen inches above the level of the fields. Paths are worn along the tops of the dykes and single file traffic is a necessity. The fields are usually reasonably dry after the rice is out. Then the ground is plowed with a water buffalo and a very primitive plow--usually one handle and a wooden lay and share. Later, as the ground gets wetter with the rains (which are needed now) the field is again plowed, across the first furrows. Then a sort of combination rake and harrow is used and this breaks up the earth into small particles which with the water makes a muck. It is in this the rice plants are transplanted one at a time. The best condition is presented by a layer of water over the soil, said water to be all of six inches (or more) in depth during the growing season. There is so little water now that some of the fields aren't even muddy and so we all welcome any rain that falls--we should worry about the roads! Crops are the first consideration now.

So we walked between rice fields and over hills and thro' thickets of brush and finally came into a little clearing where a village lay. In a house--a heathen home, by the way--, we found an old, old woman, nearly blind. She is a Christian but is cared for in this home since her own house fell down. She was much interested in Mrs. French and myself, because we are strange and she felt us over as the blind do in an effort to see us with her fingers. She was so happy to see Miss Moninger that she could hardly let her go and said over and over how she regretted not getting to church but she can't see enough to follow the winding road. This home was quite clean and neat--for the home of that type. The floor was of stone but was swept clean. A baby slept in a little wicker basket suspended by a heavy coil spring from the ceiling. There was a table, three chairs and a settee in the main room. besides a carpenter's bench and tools. There were some ancestral tablets on the walls. Their sleeping rooms and kitchen we didn't see.

At the next house we visited the family is Christian. There are five sons in the family and four are married. Their wives and families all live at the father's house but each family has

its own separate apartment. These apartments are built around an open court. Two of the daughter's-in-law were at home the afternoon we were there--No 2 and NO4. No 1 and No 3 had gone to a wedding. It was interesting to watch them all. Of course the mother-in-law has precedence and one talks to her first, then to the oldest daughter-in-law. No. 2 was very pretty and vivacious and she and her mother-in-law both talked amiably with us (the editorial form of the pronoun! I can't talk Hainanese yet!) Just as we were leaving daughter-in-law No. 1 appeared and just like that, No 2 kept still and had no word to say and No. 1 did all the talking! No 4 scarcely opened her head and was being a very proper daughter-in-law thereby! There I saw a baby of No 1 with an abscess and suggested they bring him to the hospital. This was done the next day and the abscess opened. Since this was a Christian home, before we left a song was sung--Jesus Loves Me--and Miss Moninger offered a prayer. They gave us some oranges--from their own trees--and some star-fruit. We enjoyed them a lot. Their home was well cared for and neat tho' it is quite typically Chinese, too.

I wish sometimes I had a movie camera to get the motion of the palm fronds in the wind. I sit at my desk and watch them against the sky and it is quite entrancing. Each frond is made up of many tiny--or narrow leaves (or whatever a botanist would call them)-- This isn't a good sketch, but let it represent a palm frond. Imagine it at the top of a tree--nearly upright, the tip bending a little with its own weight. Imagine a light breeze, not enough to be noticed on the ground, but enough to set all those little narrow leaves into gentle vibratory motion. Seen against the sky they look like little fingers waving back and forth. Then a stronger breeze comes up--enough to sway the whole frond but this little dancing motion continues all the time among these many compound divisions of the frond.

How goes the school work? Can well imagine you are busy--are you playing basket ball this year? Let me hear about it.

Your mother asked about the Christmas gifts--i.e., expressed regret that duty was so high. I imagine a handkerchief or something of that sort could be used to put in and it wouldn't add to the bulk and would be all right. There is not likely to be much duty on things sent by mail provided the value is only a dollar or so but there is duty on things which are valued high. Things can be sent from here with a value up to $5.00 without extra duty being charged but beyond $5.00 about 90% of the cost price is charged--payable to consignee. That's the worst part of it--if I could get something to send home and could pay all of it I wouldn't mind, but to have you pay for it there would be too bad.

I got some Chinese silk Friday to make a jacket of to wear with some of my sleeveless dresses--especially that black dress which still has wear in it tho' it is patched on the back. Will enclose sample. It cost $10.80, local currency, for 6 feet of it--goods is all sold by the foot here and a Chinese foot is 14 inches.